



The Principal's Strategy in Instilling Islamic Values in A Multicultural School

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the principal's leadership strategies in instilling moderate Islamic values within a multicultural school environment. The research was conducted at SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto, utilizing a qualitative approach with a case study and phenomenological methods. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the principal, Islamic education teachers, and students, as well as through observations and document analysis. The findings reveal that the principal's strategies employ a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, social, and academic values, as well as role modeling by teachers and students, and the contextual adaptation of religious programs in an inclusive manner. The values of tasamuh (tolerance) and 'adl (justice) serve as the foundation for fostering social harmony. These findings highlight the effectiveness of moderate Islamic approaches in strengthening students' religious character while creating a tolerant and inclusive educational ecosystem in public schools.

Keywords: Inclusivity; Islamic Values; Multicultural Education; Principal's Strategy; Religious Moderation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis strategi kepemimpinan kepala sekolah dalam menanamkan nilai-nilai keislaman moderat di lingkungan sekolah multikultural. Studi ini dilakukan di SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto dengan pendekatan kualitatif menggunakan metode studi kasus dan fenomenologi. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam dengan kepala sekolah, guru PAI, dan siswa, serta observasi dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa strategi kepala sekolah mencakup pendekatan holistik yang menyatukan nilai spiritual, sosial, dan akademik; keteladanan guru dan siswa; serta adaptasi program keagamaan yang kontekstual dan inklusif. Nilai tasamuh (toleransi) dan 'adl (keadilan) menjadi fondasi dalam membangun harmoni sosial. Temuan ini menegaskan efektivitas pendekatan Islam moderat dalam memperkuat karakter religius sekaligus menciptakan ekosistem pendidikan yang toleran dan inklusif di sekolah negeri.

Kata kunci: Inklusivitas; Moderasi Beragama; Nilai Keislaman; Pendidikan Multikultural; Strategi Kepala Sekolah.

Introduction

Amid the dynamics of globalization and the rapid flow of information, educational institutions are required not only to produce academically competent graduates but also to cultivate individuals with strong moral character and values. Religious values and tolerance are integral components of the eighteen-character values developed within the framework of national education. Strengthening these values serves as a crucial foundation in shaping students' character, particularly in the context of multicultural schools, which require wise and inclusive management of diversity (Suparjo et al., 2022). One of the major challenges faced by multicultural schools is how to instill authentic Islamic values amid cultural and religious pluralism and globalization's influences. The urgency of Islamic character education is increasingly significant in shaping a generation that is principled, tolerant, and prepared to navigate the dynamics of the globalization era (Rofi'i & Latifah, 2023). SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto is a state vocational school that represents this condition, with diverse ethnicities, beliefs, and cultures coexisting within a single educational environment. In this context, the principal's role becomes vital not only as a manager of school administration but also as a key figure in instilling spiritual values (Iqbal et al., 2024).

Various studies have shown that school principals play a strategic role in instilling Islamic values and shaping students' religious character through their roles as managers, educators, motivators, and innovators. This is also achieved through personal example, communication with parents, and structured religious programs. The leadership of school principals has also been proven to enhance teacher performance and educator professionalism, although challenges remain, such as limited competencies and internal resistance (Daud, 2024; Maulid Agustin & Firmansyah, 2023; Noviani & Habiby, 2023). On the other hand, transformational leadership is considered effective in supporting multicultural education, as it fosters an inclusive culture that values diversity. However, the integration of transformational leadership and multicultural education within the context of multicultural vocational schools remains underexplored (Inton et al., 2024). The study by Fatmawada and Abd Asis (2021) is one of the few examples that discuss the integration of transformational leadership with the application of multicultural education in vocational schools. However, similar studies remain very limited, both in number and in terms of geographical scope and school context. Therefore, further research is urgently needed to support the improvement of

education quality and character development within diverse settings. (Inton et al., 2024; Laha et al., 2021)

Islamic education faces significant challenges in a multicultural environment, especially because adolescents are highly vulnerable to the influences of diverse religious thoughts and practices around them. In this context, schools are required to become productive arenas for instilling inclusive religious attitudes to create harmonious interfaith relationships. The emergence of competing religious ideas in the public sphere demands that schools act as cultural filters and dynamic facilitators of peaceful student life. Therefore, inclusive education becomes crucial by fostering tolerant religious attitudes based on the principle of mutual respect. Religious teachers play a strategic role in teaching Islamic teachings moderately and contextually so that students can coexist in a pluralistic society and cultivate tolerance from an early age. (Suparjo et al., 2022) Efforts to uphold Islamic values amid ideological pressure and repressive policies must be carried out peacefully, intelligently, and contextually so that they serve both as a spiritual fortress and a bridge for dialogue within a pluralistic society (Hanif & Maula, 2022). This highlights the urgency of instilling inclusive and moderate Islamic values as a solution to maintain social harmony, prevent radicalism, and foster national commitment and tolerance. Moderate Islamic education promotes a balanced understanding of religion that involves practicing religious teachings while respecting differences in beliefs, to create a harmonious, open, and non-exclusive religious community. (Adib et al., 2025)

This study aims to describe and analyze the strategies employed by the principal of SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto in instilling Islamic values in a multicultural school setting. The focus is on the application of transformational leadership to cultivate an inclusive, tolerant, and diversity-appreciative Islamic school culture. The approach emphasizes character development through role modeling, communication, and adaptive religious programs. The study also explores the implementation of Islamic values as *rahmatan lil'alam* (a mercy to all creation) within multicultural education practices to create a peaceful learning environment. The results are expected to contribute to the development of an Islamic leadership model in diverse vocational education settings. This research examines the principal's leadership strategies in instilling Islamic values in a multicultural vocational high school, focusing on three principles of transformational leadership. First, the principal serves as a religious and ethical Islamic

role model who inspires others. Second, the internalization of Islamic values is achieved through learning that is responsive to the cultural and religious diversity of the students. Third, a harmonious climate is created through inclusive religious programs that involve all stakeholders. These three aspects are analyzed using qualitative methods, including interviews, observations, and documentation.

Preliminary findings based on interviews and observations at SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto indicate that although the school has implemented various religious programs, such as congregational prayers, Qur'anic recitation, and inclusive religious mentoring, several challenges remain. These include resistance among some students, limited institutional funding, and the difficulty of contextualizing religious activities for a culturally diverse student population. This reveals a gap between the school's commitment to religious moderation and the practical strategies needed to implement it effectively in a multicultural context.

This study differs from previous research in several ways. Siregar & Nasution, (2024) emphasized the principal's contribution to promoting tolerance in a multicultural junior high school setting, but did not explore the integration of Islamic values or leadership strategy in vocational education. Kadir et al., (2025) investigated Islamic character education in a relatively homogenous rural school, focusing on religious discipline and community support without addressing the complexities of diversity and inclusive leadership. Meanwhile, Datunsolang et al., (2022) presented a conceptual analysis based on literature, rather than empirical research, and did not examine the role of leadership in practice.

Therefore, this study seeks to fill those gaps by offering an empirical and context-specific analysis of leadership strategies that integrate moderate Islamic values within a multicultural school environment. The novelty of this research lies in its integrative approach—combining spiritual, social, and academic dimensions through holistic, exemplary, and adaptive leadership practices, which has not been sufficiently explored in previous studies.

Methods

This study applies a qualitative design using three interrelated approaches: phenomenology, case study, and socio-religious perspectives. These methods aim to deeply understand real-life phenomena within their contextual settings (Assyakurrohim

et al., 2023; Poltak & Widjaja, 2024; Septiana et al., 2024). The phenomenological approach explores participants' subjective experiences (Hanif et al., 2024) The case study focuses on SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto as a multicultural school integrating Islamic values in its policies, practices, and social interactions. The research highlights the principal's leadership strategies, associated challenges, and their impact on fostering tolerance and inclusive Islamic identity. It integrates both social and religious perspectives to show how values like justice and togetherness are applied in daily school life (Christanti & Hanif, 2024)

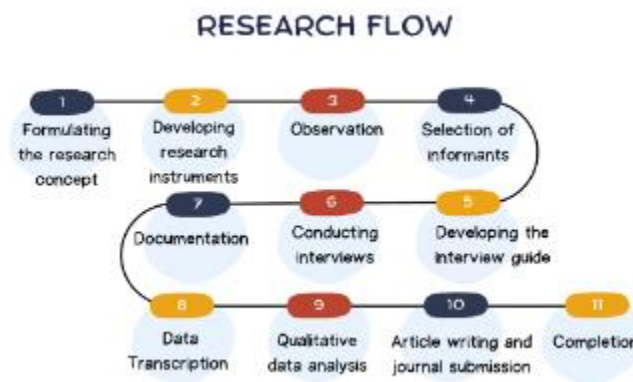


Figure 1. Research Implementation Stages

The research process began with identifying problems and developing instruments, followed by observations and interviews with key informants – principals, teachers, and students. Data were collected through guided interviews, observation, and documentation, then transcribed and analyzed thematically. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, consisting of three interactive stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing (Zulfirman, 2022). These three components begin after the data collection process is completed. See Figure 2.

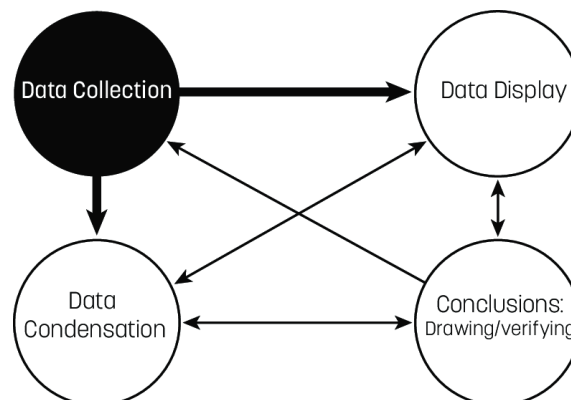


Figure 2. Qualitative Data Analysis Model Flow According to Miles & Huberman

This iterative process ensures the credibility of findings regarding strategic leadership in embedding Islamic values. (Najela et al., 2025; Zulfirman, 2022)

Results and Discussion

Based on participatory observations, in-depth interviews, and document studies, this study found that the principal's strategy in instilling Islamic values at SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto is collaborative, inclusive, and contextual. Transformational leadership is combined with core Islamic values: *tasamuh* (tolerance), *'adl* (justice), and *ukhuwah* (togetherness) – to create a harmonious school environment. These values are integrated through three pillars: responsive school policies, value-based habituation programs, and the active involvement of teachers and students as role models. The following are excerpts from interviews with the principal, Islamic education teachers, and students:

Principal's Perspective on Value Internalization

According to Widada (2025) The principal of SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto (interviewed on May 27, 2025), the strategy for instilling Islamic values begins with facilitating experiential religious learning through the provision of facilities such as a mosque, routine congregational prayers, Quran recitation (*tadarus*), and Islamic literacy programs. He stated, "We provide facilities such as a mosque and support routine activities like congregational prayers and *tadarus*. Muslim students engage in religious practices, and we also provide space for non-Muslim students to perform their worship." (Widada, 2025)

Regarding financial limitations, he explained, "Government regulations prohibit us from collecting any fees from students, which restricts our ability to hold practical worship activities such as *Qurban* and *Zakat al-Fitr*. As a result, we only teach these practices theoretically." On the importance of tolerance, Dani Priya Widada emphasized, "We strive to nurture an attitude of tolerance by fostering mutual respect. Even differences within Islam itself are utilized as teaching moments to help students understand and embrace diversity." (Widada, 2025)

He also shared, "Every morning from 7:00 to 7:15, we hold sessions of *tadarus*, literacy activities, or Quran memorization, guided by the first-period teacher. With 60 classes, at least 60 teachers are actively involved on a rotating basis." The school also

recognizes achievements in Quran memorization. He added, "We offer annual rewards for students who succeed in memorizing Juz 30. This year, 11 students received awards, and it serves as motivation for others."

Islamic Education Teacher's Role in Supporting the Principal's Strategy

Sumiati, an Islamic education teacher (interviewed on May 26, 2025), elaborated on her role in reinforcing the principal's strategies. She said, "We regularly conduct joint Quran recitation every Tuesday, memorization sessions every Thursday, and a *Jum'at Religi* program each month. While Muslim students engage in Islamic religious activities, non-Muslim students participate in parallel worship practices according to their beliefs." She highlighted her pedagogical approach, stating, "I adopt an inclusive approach by explaining differences in religious practice objectively and without judgment. This allows students to build mutual respect and better understanding across differences." Concerning special events, she added, "During Ramadan, we organize a one-week *pesantren kilat* where students and teachers actively engage in learning and worship. Students also serve as mentors in Quran recitation groups and discussion forums." (Sumiati, 2025) Despite some challenges, she noted, "Occasionally, we face a lack of motivation among certain students, sometimes due to non-academic factors, but overall participation is good. Programs like PTK (Quran reading and writing) and the memorization of Juz 30 have notably improved students' Quranic skills." (Sumiati, 2025)

Students' Perceptions and Responses to Religious Programs

Ravanny, a 10th-grade student (interviewed on May 28, 2025), shared his experience, saying, "The *tadarus* and *dhuha* prayers motivate me to be more committed to worship, especially because we do them together as a group." Fitri, an 11th-grade student, expressed, "I enjoy participating in the religious activities, particularly during Ramadan. As part of the Rohis committee, I help organize our own study sessions, which makes it even more meaningful." Inayah, a 12th-grade student, commented, "These regular religious activities help improve my personal discipline and spiritual focus. The mentoring sessions also allow me to reflect on my daily behavior and life goals." (Ravanny et al., 2025)

When discussing values emphasized at school, Ravanny said, "We are often reminded about tolerance, discipline, and cooperation. Teachers provide clear

consequences when these are neglected, which helps us understand their importance." Fitri added, "The school practices interfaith tolerance very well. Despite our different religions, we remain friends and respect one another's beliefs." Inayah also noted, "Honesty, respect, and responsibility are the core values teachers emphasize. They consistently model these values and reinforce them during lessons and school activities." (Ravanny et al., 2025)

On their comfort in the religious environment, Ravanny stated, "I feel supported here. Learning from religious and cultural differences has been a valuable experience." Fitri observed, "Even though we come from various backgrounds, the school community promotes mutual respect and inclusion." Inayah confirmed, "Although I come from a different cultural background, I feel welcomed and accepted. The environment fosters respect and equality." (Ravanny et al., 2025)

They also acknowledged changes among their peers. Ravanny observed, "More students are joining religious practices like congregational prayer than before." Fitri added, "Since the morning Quran recitation began, students have become more consistent in reading the Quran before classes." Inayah concluded, "I see increased discipline, better behavior, and greater cooperation among students, especially in group tasks and community programs." (Ravanny et al., 2025)

Analysis of Findings

The research findings indicate that the principal's strategy in instilling Islamic values at SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto has been implemented effectively through an integrative and adaptive approach tailored to the multicultural context. This strategy is built upon three main pillars: a holistic approach, exemplary leadership and participation, and contextual adaptation to student diversity.

The principal adopts a holistic approach that integrates spiritual, social, and academic aspects within both the teaching process and school life. Islamic values are not only taught through ritual practices but also internalized through school policies, curriculum, and meaningful learning activities. As the principal stated, "We provide facilities such as a mosque and support routine activities like congregational prayers and tadarus, Muslim students engage in religious practices, and we also provide space for non-Muslim students to perform their worship" (Widada, 2025). These inclusive facilities and programs ensure that spiritual practices are embedded in the school's daily rhythm.

The morning tadarus session, held from 7:00 to 7:15 am and involving 60 rotating teachers, further reinforces collective commitment and shared responsibility. Recognition programs for students who memorize Juz 30 also motivate religious engagement and personal discipline.(Widada, 2025) These findings are consistent with a study conducted at SD Islam Bustan El Firdaus (Rusmanto & Hanif, 2024), in which character education based on the theories of humanism, constructivism, and self-determination proved effective in fostering students' self-awareness, empathy, and learning motivation through contextual and reflective learning. Thus, the holistic approach serves as a strategic foundation for embedding Islamic values as an integral part of the educational process.

The success of value internalization relies not only on policy structures but also on exemplary behavior and active engagement from the school community. Teachers serve as role models, demonstrating Islamic values such as courtesy, responsibility, and compassion in daily interactions. Sumiati, the Islamic education teacher, emphasized, "I adopt an inclusive approach by explaining differences in religious practice objectively, which allows students to build mutual respect." (Sumiati, 2025). She further added, "During Ramadan, students serve as mentors in Quran recitation groups and discussion forums."

Student testimonies also reflect this participatory model. Fitri, an 11th-grade student, said, "As part of the Rohis committee, I help organize our study sessions, which makes it even more meaningful." Inayah, a 12th-grade student, observed, "These regular religious activities help improve my discipline and spiritual focus." These narratives demonstrate how active participation strengthens religious character while fostering leadership and peer-to-peer learning in an inclusive context.(Ravanny et al., 2025)

At BA Aisyiyah Gumiwang (Naningsih & Hanif, 2024) For example, teachers habituate students to greet others with salam, perform daily prayers, dress modestly, and share with others as a form of internalizing Islamic values in everyday life. The principal demonstrates a high level of adaptability in designing religious programs that respect students' diverse religious and cultural backgrounds. Constraints such as limited funding are met with creative alternatives. As the principal explained, "Government regulations prohibit us from collecting any fees... so we only teach practices like Qurban

and Zakat al-Fitr theoretically” (Widada, 2025). Despite these limitations, the school ensures that all students feel included and valued.

Students affirm this inclusive climate. Inayah noted, “Although I come from a different cultural background, I feel welcomed and accepted. The environment fosters respect and equality.” Ravanny, a 10th-grade student, highlighted the value of religious group activities, saying, “The tadarus and dhuha prayers motivate me to be more committed to worship, especially because we do them together as a group.” Fitri added, “Despite our different religions, we remain friends and respect one another’s beliefs.” (Ravanny et al., 2025). These accounts indicate that contextual adaptation supports not just harmony but deep intercultural understanding and social cohesion.

This approach reflects a form of active tolerance that goes beyond merely avoiding conflict, actively fostering equal relationships within diversity, as practiced at PKBM Marsudi Karya Beji (Kusrini & Hanif, 2024). Overall, the holistic approach integrates spiritual, intellectual, social, and moral aspects to comprehensively shape students' character (Sukatin et al., 2023). Transparency and active participation involve students, parents, and the community in the learning process to foster empathy and tolerance (Mukhsin, 2024). Contextual adaptation adjusts teaching methods to students' cultural backgrounds to promote inclusivity and harmony (Fita Mustafida, 2020; Rosyad, 2019). Although this strategy supports understanding and diversity, challenges remain in ensuring that all students feel represented and valued. The principal’s strategy in the context of a multicultural school demonstrates that effective instillation of Islamic values requires an integrative approach that goes beyond the boundaries of formal rituals, supported by exemplary practice, collective participation, and sensitivity to pluralism. This strategy not only shapes students to be religious on an individual level but also builds a school ecosystem that is inclusive, humanistic, and aligned with the spirit of character education based on the universal values of Islam.

Strategic Integration of Islamic Values in a Multicultural School Environment

This study examines the complexity of instilling Islamic values in a multicultural school environment through three complementary qualitative approaches: phenomenology, case study, and social religious analysis. The main focus is on identifying challenges in building social harmony and formulating strategies that

integrate Islamic values into school policies, curriculum, and culture at SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto. The study reveals four fundamental challenges: first, limitations in resources, including funding and supporting facilities, which restrict the intensity and variety of religious programs; second, student resistance to religious programs, particularly from those who perceive the religious agenda as coercive; third, government policies that constrain parental financial participation in religious activities; and fourth, the dynamics of diversity, where varied backgrounds require a sensitive approach to ensure that programs do not appear exclusive or impose the values of a particular group. These challenges reflect the tension between religious identity and inclusive practices, as also noted in multicultural education settings, where diversity requires strategies that uphold equality and mutual respect (Ibrahim, 2013; Putri et al., 2023).

The concept of hermeneutic awareness serves as an important foundation in addressing the diversity of interpretations of Islamic values. Hanif & Syarifah, (2022) emphasize that hermeneutic awareness is expected to foster an inclusive and tolerant attitude in facing diversity. Furthermore, Hanif & Salsabillah, (2024) explain that openness and dialogue are essential pillars supporting the development of an inclusive character, aiming to cultivate citizens who are not only tolerant but also understand cultural, religious, and social diversity. These ideas align with the vision of Islamic education proposed by KH. Ahmad Dahlan and other Islamic thinkers who emphasize *tasamuh* (tolerance), *adab* (ethics), and *mas'uliyah* (responsibility) as core components of Islamic character education (Septianti et al., 2021).

Based on these three approaches, the synergy of the principal's strategy at SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto can be detailed as follows:

1. **Holistic Approach:** The holistic approach implemented by the principal of SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto emphasizes the integration of Islamic values beyond mere ritual aspects, permeating the entire school ecosystem. Inclusive policies are realized through the provision of adequate worship facilities for all religious adherents, such as a mosque for Muslim students and dedicated prayer rooms for non-Muslim students. Value habituation programs, such as Qur'an memorization (*tahfiz*) and religious mentoring, are systematically designed, involving all school components. This approach aligns with the internalization of spiritual values such as *aqidah* and *ibadah*, as outlined by Febrianti et al., (2025), and supports moral values through

discipline and ethical conduct. Islamic values are not only taught in religious subjects but are also internalized through the hidden curriculum, such as orderly behavior, respect for teachers, and cooperation in group learning. School policies also reflect the principle of justice ('adl), for example, by providing equal opportunities for all students to lead activities regardless of their religious background. This echoes the values of inclusivity and character formation emphasized in Islamic and multicultural education (Rahmah et al., 2025; Wilodati et al., 2022).

2. Exemplary Leadership and Active Participation: The leadership of the principal and teachers as inclusive role models is a decisive factor in creating a school environment that values diversity. The attitude of avoiding coercion regarding certain religious attributes, such as not requiring non-Muslim students to wear the hijab, demonstrates a genuine commitment to the principle of tolerance (tasamuh). This reflects the Islamic teaching that values adab and freedom of conscience (Septianti et al., 2021). Active participation of students in designing and implementing religious activities, such as serving as mentors in the Islamic Student Organization (Rohis) or organizing short-term boarding school events, fosters a sense of mas'uliyah (responsibility) and ownership. The involvement of non-Muslim students in social activities initiated by Rohis, such as community service or cultural performances, further strengthens ukhuwah (brotherhood) and interfaith bonds. This mirrors the goals of multicultural education to cultivate tolerance, empathy, and inclusive identities (Ibrahim, 2013; Putri et al., 2023).
3. Contextual Adaptation: The school demonstrates a high level of adaptability in implementing religious programs in the multicultural context and available resources. When funding constraints hinder the implementation of practical sacrificial rituals (qurban), the school replaces them with theoretical lessons about the meaning of qurban and the value of sharing in Islam. This reflects the Islamic value of ta'dib education for character development rather than mere ritual performance (Hanif & Fian, 2023). The principle of ukhuwah islamiyah (Islamic brotherhood) is manifested through interfaith group work during learning activities, where students from diverse backgrounds collaborate to complete specific projects. Activities such as panel discussions on religious holidays or joint national day commemorations further strengthen multicultural understanding. These practices support the integration of spiritual, moral, and social Islamic values (Febrianti et al.,

2025), while also embodying the principles of inclusive multicultural education and social justice, Nieto & Bode in Ibrahim, (2013).

4. The Role of Islamic Values as Social Cohesion: Islamic values such as *tasamuh* (tolerance) and *'adl* (justice) are actively utilized as social bonds within the multicultural school environment. Potential conflicts arising from the perception of exclusivity in Muslim religious activities are anticipated through various mechanisms: regular open dialogues among teachers, students, and parents; flexible policies that allow adjustments to activities; and transparency in decision-making regarding school programs. A concrete example is the organization of *Jumat Religi* (Religious Friday), whose content not only covers Islamic teachings but also universal human values accepted by all religions. When there are special Muslim activities, such as intensive Islamic boarding school programs (*pesantren kilat*), the school always provides meaningful alternative activities for non-Muslim students. This reflects the value of *rahmatan lil 'lil' alamin* Islam as a mercy for all creation and supports the vision of Islamic education as a means to develop noble character and respect for diversity (Faqihudin & Hanif, 2024; Hanif & Prasetianingtiyas, 2023)

The impact of this strategy is reflected in: increased voluntary student participation in religious activities; harmonized relationships among students from diverse religious backgrounds; the formation of a school culture that is both religious and inclusive; and the strengthening of students' character reflecting universal Islamic values such as honesty, responsibility, and tolerance. This comprehensive strategy demonstrates that Islamic values, when taught contextually and inclusively, can serve as a unifying force within a multicultural school environment while addressing global challenges related to character education in pluralistic societies. Theoretically, these findings enrich the model of Islamic educational leadership by emphasizing the synergy between religious and social values in a multicultural context, while supporting Banks' (2013) theory as cited by Alhaddad, (2020) regarding inclusive education. Practical recommendations include teacher training in dialogical methods based on hermeneutics, collaboration with the community to overcome funding limitations, and program evaluation through surveys measuring the level of tolerance among students.

Complementing these findings, Khawani et al., (2022) assert that the success of character education, particularly from the hadith perspective, lies in its holistic and

experiential approach where students learn values not only cognitively but affectively through modeled behavior and social reinforcement. In line with this, Fitria & Karnadi, (2023) demonstrate that a well-managed school culture such as congregational prayers, structured religious curricula, and moral habituation programs significantly contributes to building students' religious identity and discipline. Furthermore, Munir, (2024) reinforces the idea that Islamic moral education must extend beyond academic instruction to encompass the full spectrum of human development moral, spiritual, and social – through consistent habituation and integration into the lived experiences of students. These studies collectively affirm that the strategic integration of Islamic values within schools not only strengthens character education but also supports inclusive, harmonious coexistence in diverse educational settings.

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that the leadership strategy of the principal at SMK Negeri 1 Purwokerto in instilling moderate Islamic values has proven effective through a holistic approach, exemplary conduct, and contextual adaptation. Core values such as *tasamuh* (tolerance), *'adl* (justice), and *ukhuwah* (togetherness) are systematically integrated into school policies, religious activities, and social interactions. This strategy successfully fosters a school culture that is both religious and inclusive, while strengthening students' character in navigating diversity.

This study is limited in terms of its geographical and institutional scope, as it was conducted in a single public school with specific characteristics. Additionally, funding constraints and student resistance to religious programs remain challenges that require strategic management. Future research is recommended to expand the study to multiple schools with diverse multicultural backgrounds to obtain a more comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the effectiveness of leadership strategies in promoting inclusive Islamic education.

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